

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7301

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 1675

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TH, NL

SUBJ: GROWING DUTCH INTEREST IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN NARCOTICS

TRAFFICKING

SUMMARY. SEVERAL INDICATIONS HAVE APPEARED IN BANGKOK THAT THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT IS SHOWING GREATER CONCERN OVER THE FLOW OF ILLEGAL NARCOTICS FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA TO THE NETHERLANDS. THE VISIT LAST DECEMBER OF TWO SENIOR DUTCH POLICE OFFICIALS IS ONE SIGN OF THIS INTEREST. ASIDE FROM THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE VISIT, TANGIBLE RESULTS WILL PROBABLY BE SEEN IN TERMS OF IMPROVED FLOW OF RELEVANT NARCOTICS INTELLIGENCE BETWEEN BANGKOK AND THE HAGUE. THE EMBASSY OF THE NETHERLANDS IN BANGKOK HAS ALSO CONFIRMED THAT THERE IS ACTION UNDER WAY IN THE NETHERLANDS WHICH WILL BE LIKELY TO RESULT IN INCREASED ATTENTION TO THE NARCOTICS TRAFFIC AND TO THE ROLE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AS A SOURCE OF HARD DRUGS. END SUMMARY.

1. J. VAN STRATEN, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE CRIMINAL INFORMATION CENTER OF THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND C.B. TOORENAAR, AMSTERDAM CID CHIEF VISITED THAILAND DECEMBER 8-11. DURING THEIR THREE DAYS HERE, THE DUTCH POLICE OFFICIALS

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ATTENDED A BRIEFING PRESENTED BY THAI POLICE OFFICERS

AND DISCUSSED THE NARCOTICS SITUATION WITH LOCAL SOURCES, INCLUDING A REPRESENTATIVE OF DEA'S BANGKOK OFFICE. A FORMAL DEA BRIEFING WAS CANCELLED, HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF AN UNEXPECTED SCHEDULE CHANGE. THE DUTCH OFFICERS ALSO SPENT ONE DAY IN CHIANG MAI PROVINCE, ACCOMPANIED BY POLICE COLONEL CHAWALIT YOTMANI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE RTG CENTRAL NARCOTICS BOARD (CNB), AND HERMAN KNIPPENBERG, THIRD SECRETARY OF THE DUTCH EMBASSY IN BANGKOK. FROM CHIANG MAI, THE PARTY FLEW BY HELICOPTER TO SEVERAL TRIBAL VILLAGES IN WHICH THE UNITED NATIONS/THAI PROGRAM FOR DRUG ABUSE CONTROL IS ENGAGED IN CROP SUBSTITUTION WORK. THE DUTCH OFFICERS LATER REMARKED TO COLONEL CHAWALIT THAT THEY HAD FOUND THEIR TOUR OF GOLDEN TRIANGLE VILLAGES MOST VALUABLE AND NOW HAD A BETTER APPRECIATION FOR THE COMPLEXITY OF THE OPIUM GROWING PROBLEM IN THE AREA.

2. THE VISIT APPEARED TO HAVE SEVERAL RESULTS. THE DUTCH OFFICER RECEIVED THEIR FIRST EXPOSURE TO THE NARCOTICS SITUATION IN THAILAND. THEY ALSO MADE VALUABLE PERSONAL CONTACTS WITH THE THAI OFFICIALS WORKING ON THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM. IN TERMS OF MORE TANGIBLE RESULTS, COLONEL CHAWALIT AND MR. KNIPPENBERG SAID THAT THERE WAS AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE THAI CNB AND THE DUTCH OFFICERS TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING NARCOTICS TRAFFIC BETWEEN THAILAND AND THE NETHERLANDS. MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF BANGKOK, IT APPEARS THAT THE VISIT OF THE TWO POLICE OFFICERS TO THAILAND AND OTHER SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES IS AN INDICATION THAT THE DUTCH ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT NARCOTICS AND ATTEMPTING TO DO SOMETHING TO LIMIT THE SOURCE OF THE DRUGS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. THAI POLICE SAY THEY NOTED THE INCREASED DUTCH INTEREST AT THE OCTOBER INTERPOL CONFERENCE IN BUENOS AIRES. IT WAS AT THIS CONFERENCE THAT THE DUTCH REPRESENTATIVE APPROACHED POLICE MAJOR GENERAL PHAO SARASIN, SECRETARY GENERAL OF CNB, AND SUGGESTED THAT VAN STRATEN AND TOORENAAR VISIT THAILAND. MR. KNIPPENBERG AT THE DUTCH EMBASSY IN BANGKOK ALSO TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER ON JANUARY 21 THAT THERE ARE CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN THE

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NETHERLANDS WHICH WILL PROBABLY RESULT IN INCREASED ACTION AGAINST HARD DRUGS SUCH AS HEROIN. KNIPPENBERG CONFIRMED A JANUARY 14 AP STORY DATED IN AMSTERDAM WHICH REPORTED THAT HOLLAND IS ABOUT TO SET UP A NATIONAL NARCOTICS SQUAD AND THAT MORE ATTENTION WILL BE GIVEN TO NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

3. COMMENT: WE ARE PLEASED TO SEE THE NEW DUTCH

ATTITUDE TOWARDS NARCOTICS CONTROL IN THAILAND AND WILL
CONTINUE TO SEEK WAYS IN WHICH TO SUPPORT THEIR EFFORT.
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